

Front!

By Floyd Hamilton Hazard

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Somewhere within the diminutive body of Cyrus Caesar Jones there lived a spirit which flourished like a green bay tree, in spite of all untoward circumstances.

It was at least a third larger than Jones himself, and for this reason, the greater part of the time, he had a firm conviction that Jones was quite a man, and equal to almost any high achievement.

He was an alert, practical, business man, with a large stock of knowledge dearly purchased at the University of Hard Work; and there was brick dust in his hair. His eyes were of a deep, comprehending blue, and when there was anything worth seeing he seldom closed them. His trim appearance was greatly in his favor; but for the past week it had availed him nothing.

Was it his fault that the old firm had failed?

"No, it was not!" Was it his fault that his weary search for another position had so far proved utterly fruitless?

Again no!

Was he to blame because his savings had melted away?

Well, hardly!

He was standing on the curb, at the intersection of Fifth avenue and Thirty-fourth street, in New York, moodily rehearsing in his mind his recent experiences, as he abstractedly watched the people in the dining room of the enormous hotel opposite.

"What a week!"

His search for similar work had degenerated into a frantic scramble for any kind of work at all. And how, on nothing, pay rent and doctor's bills and acquire food and cash to go on?

"Great heavens!" he thought. "If only I had some cash!"

Cash! Cash! Cash! beat in on his brain.

"Got to have it! Can't get it!" said Jones.

"Can get it!" answered Jones' spirit. "Keep a-going. Can and will get it."

"I'm hungry," complained Jones.

"Shucks!" scoffed his friend. "Pull in your belt a couple of holes!"

At the edge of a pile of gutter-rubbish near Merry's, he noticed a string of pinkish beads.

"The little girl that lost them won't mind if I give them to Helen," he mused, as he slipped them into his pocket. "A trifling present and a doubtful one, but a big help at that. It isn't her fault that she doesn't know I'm out of work."

He cleaned them in the fountain and placed them in the lonely security of his empty purse.

A copy of the morning's paper was stuck between the slats of the bench on which he sat. He was too tired, too harassed by doubt and fear and hunger, to read; so he carried it with him.

This spirit of his made him stop to sympathize with a little girl on roller-skates.

His feet seemed fastened to the steps as he slowly dragged them up the five flights of stairs, but after the click of the latch-key his heavy heart was lifted by a glad cry as he entered the little three-room flat.

"Cyrus! Oh, you dear! Come quickly and let me press you close!" The doctor says I will soon be well. Well! Yes! Completely and soundly well! What do you think of that?"

"Thank!" he choked, as he bent over the bed and kissed his invalid wife.

"Why, Helen, darling! I can't think for the glory of it!"

"Hoary!" shouted Jones and his spirit. "Hoary!"

There was a wall from the crib by the bedside.

"Hallo, son!" he cried, as he caught up the baby and kissed him. "Mother is a goin' to get well! Dye hear that! Yes, sir! Listen to that and quit it—your dear little Indian!"

He drew up a chair and sat heavily upon it, the child in his arms.

"What is it that you need tonight, dear heart?" he inquired.

"Two prescriptions, some more port wine, milk and eggs," she answered.

"Oh, dear! Sickiness is so terribly expensive. I just know it is costing more than your income, even with all that the people in the house have done for me."

"Well, I'm a long way from being poor yet," he countered. "Poor? Well, I should say not! Can anyone call me poor, with you and the baby, and a job, and a roof over it all? Poor? With me managing things? Not! Cheer up, girl, and see what I've got for you. It's just a little something for you to wear the next Sunday you're able to go out."

She took the necklace and admired it. Then she held out her arms to him.

"You thoughtful, noble boy!" she whispered.

"Oh, Cy, dear! I forgot to tell you. The man was here today and turned off the gas. He said the bill hadn't been paid."

"Well, what a stupid oversight on my part! I'll stop in there and make them have it turned on again tonight."

"How have things gone with you today, sweetheart? Dear me! You look completely worn out."

"Fine!" he lied, and turned away his face.

"Now I must go, and I won't leave you alone a minute longer than I can help. Here is today's paper. You can read it tomorrow."

He tossed the copy he had picked up in the park upon the bed.

When the door closed behind him, Jones collapsed. He was all in. Not so, however, with Jones' spirit. It took him, villy-nilly, to the drugstore's, the grocer's, the dairy, and the gas office; and it forced Jones to make the four greatest "talks" of his life.

"The grand smash for mine tomorrow night!" said Jones to himself, on his way back to the house.

Half finished as he was, Jones managed to control himself and to cook his supper before he ate it. By the time he had devoured it his whole being was shouting for relaxation and rest. So, after rapid preparations for the night, he sought his cot, which had been set up in the little dining room, stretched himself upon it, and immediately fell into deep sleep.

From a phantasmagoria of doctors, sick persons, hospitals, babies, surfaced men who refused him work, house agents, tradesmen, children on roller-skates, little girls who had lost things, restaurants where he had eaten but could not pay, the police, jails, and the like, he was released by a cry from his wife. He awoke, and with a bound was on his feet.

It was early morning.

"What is it, Helen, darling?" he cried, as he rushed into the next room, fear gripping him.

She was propped up by a pillow and was excitedly reading the copy of the newspaper he had given her the night before.

"My beads, Cyrus! My beads!" she exclaimed. "Where did you get them?"

He sat weakly down upon the foot of the bed.

"Down-town," he faltered.

"Did you buy them or did you find them?" she questioned eagerly.

"I found them near Merry's on Fifth avenue," he replied shamefacedly, certain that all his perfidy was now discovered.

"Oh, splendid! I just knew it! I was certain of it. Here, read that."

He took the paper and saw:

\$1,000.00 reward and no questions asked upon the return of plain necklace of six-pined, rosette pearls, recently lost on Fifth avenue. Forty-second to Fifty-ninth streets.

H. T. LEFFINGWOLD, Hotel Shropshire.

"Helen, it can't be true!" he gasped as the two gazed at each other, wide-eyed.

"Let me see them, quick!"

She withdrew the necklace from its hiding place under her pillow.

His sleep-laden eyes brightened as he beheld it. He examined the beads carefully and counted them.

"Pearls!"

No doubt of it whatever in the light of his present information.

Jones' home-coming on this day of all days was a triumphal progress. He and his spirits were making holiday.

When his latch-key again admitted him he had receipts in full from the doctor and from his creditors of the previous night.

There was also a slip which recorded the fact that he had paid two months' rent in advance, properly signed by the astonished agent.

In the inner pocket of his vest there was also, reposing snugly, a bank-book.

"Was it true?" she called anxiously as he entered. "Was it really and truly true?"

"As true as ever was, sweetheart," he answered chuckling, as he came into her presence. "And here is another present."

"What! A bank-book!"

"Nothing less, my dear. And it records the gift of Helen Jones."

"Not all of it," she answered, flushed with joy. "It is the very least of my possessions."

She cuddled her baby closer and gave Jones a long, fond look through wet eyes.

"But that isn't all, dearest," said Jones. "I've secured another position, a much better one."

"You have? How is that?"

"The man who owned the fifteen thousand dollars' worth of pearls paid the reward and refused to ask any questions; but I insisted in making a full explanation. We finally had a long conversation and I incidentally mentioned that he had long needed a capable manager. He said, however, that he had searched in vain for a man of spirit and was about to give up the task in despair."

"And what did you say to that, Cy, dear?"

"I said 'I am the man,'" answered Jones truthfully. "And what is more, I succeeded in proving it to him. But that is another story."

It's about as bad as waiting for Christmas. But the days pass on just the same and every one adds something to eternity. As life widens its experiences from months to years and from years to decades it begins to take on new meaning. Time raps off life's angles and years distill wisdom from its trials and sorrows. All this linked to multiplications of itself makes eternity. After all eternity is nothing more than the sum of life's hours added to all the hours that have been or are to be. They are the sum of the minutes and in them lies the secret of eternity.—Grit.

Insects That Sing.

Among the natural curiosities of Japan are singing insects. The most prized of these is a black beetle named "susumushi," which means "insect bell." The sound that it emits resembles that of a little silver bell.

Birds.

Said the facetious feller: "The most popular chickens nowadays are the kind that have to have their feathers bought for 'em."

Minutes Count.

Most folks do not seem to know that eternity is a matter of minutes. In youth the days seem long, and the months are eternities. That is especially true when the picnic doesn't come until after the Fourth of July.

Easter Facts and Fancies



EASTER is celebrated all over the world, though not by all the world. About one-third of the people of the civilized world will observe the day as a commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth—which is to say that about one-third of the civilized world is Christian. Roughly speaking, there are about 595,000,000 Christians and about 1,982,000,000 non-Christians. The Christians are thus classified: Roman Catholics, 272,800,000; Eastern churches, 120,000,000; Protestant churches, 171,650,000. The non-Christians are thus classified: Jews, 12,205,000; Mohammedans, 221,825,000; Buddhists, 138,031,000; Hindus, 210,540,000; Confucianists and Taoists, 300,530,000; Shintoists, 25,000,000; Animists, 158,270,000; unclassified, 15,280,000.

The Christians may be geographically classified thus:

Europe—Roman Catholic, 188,700,000; Eastern churches, 98,000,000; Protestant churches, 93,000,000.

Asia—Roman Catholic, 5,500,000; Eastern churches, 17,200,000; Protestant churches, 6,000,000.

Africa—Roman Catholic, 2,500,000; Eastern churches, 3,800,000; Protestant churches, 2,750,000.

North America—Roman Catholic, 36,700,000; Eastern churches, 1,000,000; Protestant churches, 65,000,000.

South America—Roman Catholic, 36,200,000; Protestant churches, 400,000.

Oceania—Roman Catholic, 5,200,000; Protestant churches, 4,500,000.

The Jews are thus distributed: Europe, 9,250,000; Asia, 500,000; Africa, 400,000; North America, 2,000,000; South America, 35,000; Oceania, 25,000.

Another geographical classification is this:

Europe—Christians, 374,700,000; other faiths, 14,050,000; total, 388,750,000.

Asia—Christians, 28,700,000; other faiths, 808,500,000; total, 837,200,000.

Africa—Christians, 9,050,000; other faiths, 148,871,000; total, 157,921,000.

North America—Christians, 102,700,000; other faiths, 10,285,000; total, 112,985,000.

South America—Christians, 36,600,000; other faiths, 1,400,000; total, 38,000,000.

Oceania—Christians, 12,700,000; other faiths, 42,920,000; total, 55,620,000.

It may safely be said that the allied Christian nations will celebrate Easter this year with unusual solemnity. The life immortal is a comforting belief just now, when the world has been brought face to face with death by the great war as never before. Probably also it will be celebrated as usual in Germany, for the Germans make much ado over Easter.

Easter in Russia.

Even in distracted Russia Easter will be observed, for the Greek Catholic church makes much of the celebration and Easter observance is a part of the national life. Certainly Easter of 1918 was observed as usual in many parts of Russia, although the anarchist disorders were well under way. Here is a bit of description from a letter written from Kiev in 1918:

"Easter is the greatest festival of all the year; infinitely more so than Christmas. At 12 o'clock we drove out to the 'Lavra,' the oldest monastery and the richest in all Russia. Can you imagine a huge courtyard surrounded by a 40-foot wall and immense covered gateway, groups of large white buildings all ablaze with light, with the snow for a background; the center building the church, doors open, the inside lit by a thousand candles, and the chanting of 1,500 priests. In the open courtyard were thousands of soldiers with uncovered heads, each bearing a lighted candle. To the right stands the bell tower, a wonderful structure over 200 feet high. At the stroke of 12 the most wonderful bells in Russia peal forth as you have never heard bells in America. Thousands of voices cry 'Christ is risen,' and the priests come forth and march around the building."

In the days before the great war no festivals in Europe attracted so many foreigners as the celebration in Rome of the holy week. It was not unusual for more than 10,000 visitors to be present, a large proportion of them being English and Americans—and also Protestants. Doubtless there will be many visitors this Easter season. Easter Sunday is the culmination of the ceremonies. The pope himself officiates at high mass in St. Peter's with the most gorgeous ritual. It is after he extends his blessing that the papers containing prayers are thrown down from his balcony to be scrambled for by the congregation.

Jerusalem, the Holy City.

The celebration of this Easter in Jerusalem will probably be noteworthy. It is the first Easter in seven consecutive centuries which finds the holy city permanently freed from the misrule of the Moslem. Mohammedan misrule and oppression had their beginning 13 centuries ago, but the Crusaders held possession of the city twice—again under Godfrey of Bouillon (1099-1187) and again under Frederick II (1229-1244). The British, under General Allenby, were in possession at Easter of 1918, but fighting was going on in all the surrounding region and the fate of the city was still in the balance.

In normal times business in Jerusalem comes to a stop at the Easter season and religious ceremonial is the dominating interest. It is a sort of fourfold celebration. The Mohammedans contribute by holding a pilgrimage to the tomb of Moses. The Jews celebrate the passover.

Easter in the East.

Both the Greek Christian and Latin Christian churches hold elaborate celebrations. One of the most striking ceremonies is celebrated by the Greek church in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and is locally called "Miracle of the Holy Fire." The enthusiasm is so great that at several celebrations hundreds of worshippers have been crushed to death.

The essential features of the ceremony are the reception and dissemination of the "holy fire." The fire is kindled in the holy sepulcher, and passed out through an opening made for the purpose in the side of the holy tomb. It is then made use of to light candles with which every worshiper is equipped. The intention is to symbolize the descent of the Holy Spirit. The candles are kept as sacred relics and are relighted only at marriages, births and deaths.

The reception of the fire is the work of the patriarch. He appears at the head of a gorgeous procession of ecclesiastics—bishops, archbishops and priests. He leads his followers three times around the holy tomb and enters when passing the doorway the third time, leaving his followers standing by. Shortly after the "holy fire" appears through the opening in the form of a blazing torch. Men have been appointed to snatch the torch. These light their own candles and pass it on to their neighbors; every burning candle becomes a train leading on the sacred fire to a hundred others. Robert Hichens' description of the scene is in part this:

"It came at last. With a fierce gesture as of savage exultation the long-haired priest withdrew his arm from the hole and held up a great bunch of flaming candles. And then delirium seized the close-packed thousands. All the mouths opened to let out yells, shrieks and the wild ditherings of women. All the arms gesticulated with frenzy toward the smoky yellow flames. All the bodies struggled desperately, cruelly to get to them. And the priest dipped his torch, and suddenly fire began to rush through the great church. The patriarch tore out of the holy sepulcher and fell in the Greek cathedral with the fire in his hands. From the balconies near the blue star-spangled dome masses of candles were let down by long cords, were lit by priests below and were drawn up flaming. Fire encircled the rotunda, three tiers of fire. . . . Through the glare, the smoke, the roaring, the procession . . . bishops and priests, accompanied by 64,322, by acolytes, by banner bearers, by canopies beating the floor with their staves. . . . Down the avenue of banners and muskets and torches came bearded and long-haired men in magnificent vestments. . . . and the gorgeous Armenians, almost like moving idols, clad in the jewels of their wonderful treasury; and the withered-looking Copts and the astounding Abyssinians, in magenta, with partly shaved heads and dark tufts of coarse hair, like the gaudy puppets that people a nightmare."

From time immemorial the Christians of Jerusalem have observed the events of Christ's passion, death and resurrection in complete and dramatic fashion, and it was from Jerusalem that Easter customs spread to other parts of the world. The earliest record of these observances is in 385. At that time the Christians strove to realize by appropriate ceremony and ritual the events of the last acts in the life of Jesus. Each event was commemorated, as far as possible, on the spot of its occurrence. The proper passages from the Gospel were read and appropriate prayers were said as the clergy and people went in procession from place to place—Bethany, Gethsemane, Golgotha, the sepulcher and Olivet. It was during the middle ages that the character of the ceremonies changed greatly, taking on spectacular features which have persisted to the present day.

Tradition with more or less accuracy has fixed the course of the Via Dolorosa and the 14 stations at which the chief events on the way to the cross occurred. It is followed by thousands of visitors on Easter week.

Easter is the principal festival of the Christian

year for the reason that it commemorates the resurrection of Jesus. In the words of Paul, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain." "But," he says, "now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that sleep." Which is to say that the Christian religion stands on the resurrection of Jesus.

Pagan Rites Survive.

But the Easter season is observed by millions who are not even nominally Christians. They do not celebrate the resurrection of Christ, but rather the end of winter, the approach of spring, the beginning of life in nature after the long sleep of winter. Celebrations of this kind antedate recorded history. When Christianity came into the world the Christian church adopted and modified such of these pagan rites of celebration as it could not abolish. This accounts for the many queer rites of the Christian observance of Easter in various parts of the world. They are pagan rites that had their origin in the remotest past, and have been modified by time and custom and a changed meaning.

Thus the parade of fashion to Easter morning church services in the large American cities had its origin ages ago in the superstition that failure to wear at least one new piece of clothing would bring bad luck during the year. The use of the egg as a symbol of new life is far older than Christianity. The Easter rabbit is a survival of an old, old superstition. The use of flowers as an expression of rejoicing is probably almost as old as man himself. The paschal candles are in another form the bonfires lighted by our remote ancestors to celebrate the arrival of spring.

Just how the rabbits managed to get into the Easter celebration nobody seems to be able to find out with any certainty. Anyway, they are not properly rabbits; they are hares. Undoubtedly the association of the hare with Easter and its eggs was introduced here by the Germans, but where they got the idea is what none of the antiquarians have been able to learn to their satisfaction. As far as they have gone they figure this way: The relation between the moon and the hare is fairly close. The relation of the moon to Easter is very close. Gradually in ancient times the hare seems to have become associated with Easter and with Easter eggs.

Easter and the Egg.

Easter without eggs—fresh laid, dyed and sugar—would be like Christmas without Santa Claus, the stocking and the tree. And the association of the egg with Easter is easily explained. Many of the old peoples of earth have used the egg from time immemorial as the symbol of the germ of life. The wise men of old taught that the world was hatched from an egg. All over the pagan world it signified fertility and potential life. The place of the egg was therefore firmly fixed in the spring celebrations that long antedated Christ and the Christian Easter. The Christian church found the egg so firmly established as an Easter symbol that it could not be dislodged. Therefore the church adopted the egg and adopted it as a symbol of the resurrection. In the transition of Easter from a heathen to a Christian festival the tradition of the egg stands unbroken. When the coloring of eggs began, to the Christian the white stood for the immaculate conception; the red for the blood of the redemption, and the yellow for the dawn of the resurrection morn.

It is natural that many queer relics of ancient egg customs should have survived, while many have died on the way. For instance, the rulers of earth no longer indulge in Easter eggs wholesale. After the Easter celebration found its way into France every hen roost in the country was searched for the largest eggs, which were taken as a tribute to the king. And after the Easter high mass in the chapel of the Louvre there were brought into the royal cabinet pyramids of gilded eggs decked with verdure. The chaplain, after blessing them, distributed them among the persons of the court in the presence of his most Christian majesty.

In the time of Henry I, eggs were in great demand on Easter morn. In the tower is an old royal roll with an account of entry, "18d for 400 eggs to be used for ornamental purposes for Easter."

That the whole world associates the egg with Easter is shown by the fact that the Christian children in Mesopotamia play the same game as Easter of "hickies" eggs that American boys do in England in many places the boys and girls "roll" their colored eggs, just as the Washington children do on the White House grounds. This White House egg-rolling, by the way, is quite a celebration and as a curious spectacle is worth seeing.

There are many curious customs that obtain at Easter that have nothing to do with the day.

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IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)
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LESSON FOR APRIL 13

CHRIST OUR SAVIOR.

LESSON TEXTS—John 1:10-11; Matthew 2:23; John 3:16; Romans 8:31, 32.

GOLDEN TEXT—God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.—John 3:16.

PRIMARY TOPIC—Jesus our friend and savior.

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